



proud past, promising future

NEWS RELEASE

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Going swimming? Think safety!

Guidelines for preventing drowning and recreational water illnesses

Vancouver, WA – The onset of hot weather has Clark County residents thronging to swimming pools, lakes, and rivers for fun and exercise—or just to cool off. As the summer swimming season begins, the Clark County Health Department encourages people to enjoy the water and to review these important water safety tips for children and adults.

Drowning prevention

- Never leave children unsupervised in or near the water, even for a minute. Drownings happen swiftly and silently. Don't read a book or engage in other activities while supervising young children. Supervision requires complete attention, even if other adults are present.
- Learn how to swim, and improve your swimming skills.
- Never swim alone. Teach children to swim with a buddy and in lifeguarded areas.
- Wear a lifejacket when swimming in open water away from lifeguards. Wear a lifejacket while in small boats, rafting, inner tubing, water skiing, or on a personal watercraft. Ensure that children are wearing lifejackets; inflatable toys and mattresses will not keep children safe.
- Avoid alcohol when swimming. Alcohol is a major contributing factor in many drowning deaths.
- Avoid swimming in potentially dangerous areas such as fast flowing rivers or ocean beaches with riptides.
- Don't dive into shallow water or unfamiliar swimming holes.
- Limit your time in cold water.

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- Cover your spa when not in use. Ponds, five-gallon buckets, and wading pools are also drowning hazards for very young children.

Preventing recreational water illnesses:

Recreational water illnesses are spread by swallowing, breathing, or having contact with contaminated water from swimming pools, spas, lakes, rivers, or oceans. RWIs can cause a wide variety of symptoms including skin, ear, respiratory, eye, and wound infections. The most commonly reported RWI is diarrhea, caused by a variety of germs such as cryptosporidium, giardia, or E. coli. Diarrhea is easily spread by swimmers and waders who have diarrhea, whether or not they have an “accident” in the water. Here are some tips for preventing water contamination and avoiding illness:

- Don't swim when you have diarrhea. This is especially important for kids in diapers.
- Don't swallow the water you swim in. If possible, avoid getting your mouth in the water.
- Change diapers in a bathroom and not at the poolside.
- Take a shower before swimming and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers. Wash your child thoroughly with soap and water before swimming.
- Take your kids on bathroom breaks or check diapers often. If you hear “I have to go,” it may be too late.

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